



*The President's Daily Brief*

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*15 March 1972*

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

15 March 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Page 1 [redacted] North Vietnam 25X1  
[redacted] South Vietnam

In the Laos fighting, a Communist mortar attack forced an irregular battalion to abandon two defensive positions on Skyline Ridge yesterday. (Page 2)

[redacted] Soviets 25X1  
(Page 3)

Ceylonese insurgents are [redacted] planning a new campaign of terrorism. (Page 4) 25X1

Arab media are charging King Husayn with making a secret deal with Israel. (Page 5)

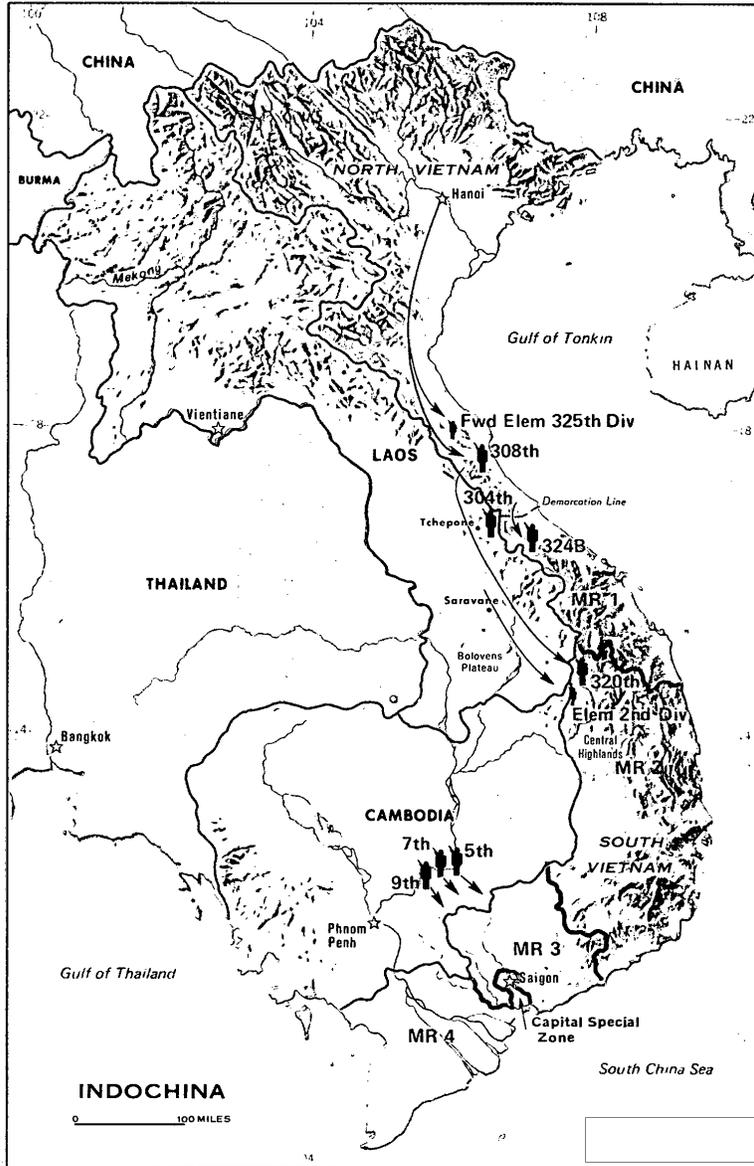
The East Germans appear to be getting in step with Soviet efforts to help assure Bundestag ratification of Bonn's Eastern treaties. (Page 5)

[redacted] Chinese 25X1  
(Page 5)

[redacted] Finns 25X1  
(Page 5)

At Annex [redacted] Cam-  
bodia. 25X1

**Communist Divisions Pose Offensive Threat to Vietnam**



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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY***NORTH VIETNAM - SOUTH VIETNAM**

With more than two months to go in the dry season, North Vietnamese infiltration toward South Vietnam and Cambodia already is equal to or greater than that for any previous year except 1967-68, when a massive infusion of manpower occurred after the Tet offensive began. About 40,000 of this season's infiltrators are earmarked for the central highlands. This is the highest number we have ever noted heading for this area, and four times the average sent there in the past three years. By contrast, the flow of men to Cambodia and the lower half of South Vietnam--the COSVN area--is running at about the same pace as in earlier years.

Since mid-December, nine Communist infantry divisions have been involved in movements toward or into South Vietnam. These include all five of the divisions based in North Vietnam that have seen combat in South Vietnam in the past four years. Three of these, the 304th, 320th, and 324B, appear to be headed for the northern half of South Vietnam, and many of their subordinate units are now in place. The 308th has moved from Hanoi to the panhandle just north of the DMZ, and there is evidence that the 325th will follow it. Farther south, major elements of the 2nd Division have returned from Laos to the central highlands. The 5th, 7th, and 9th divisions in Cambodia have moved toward the provinces bordering Saigon, the first time that all three of them have been this far east since April 1970.

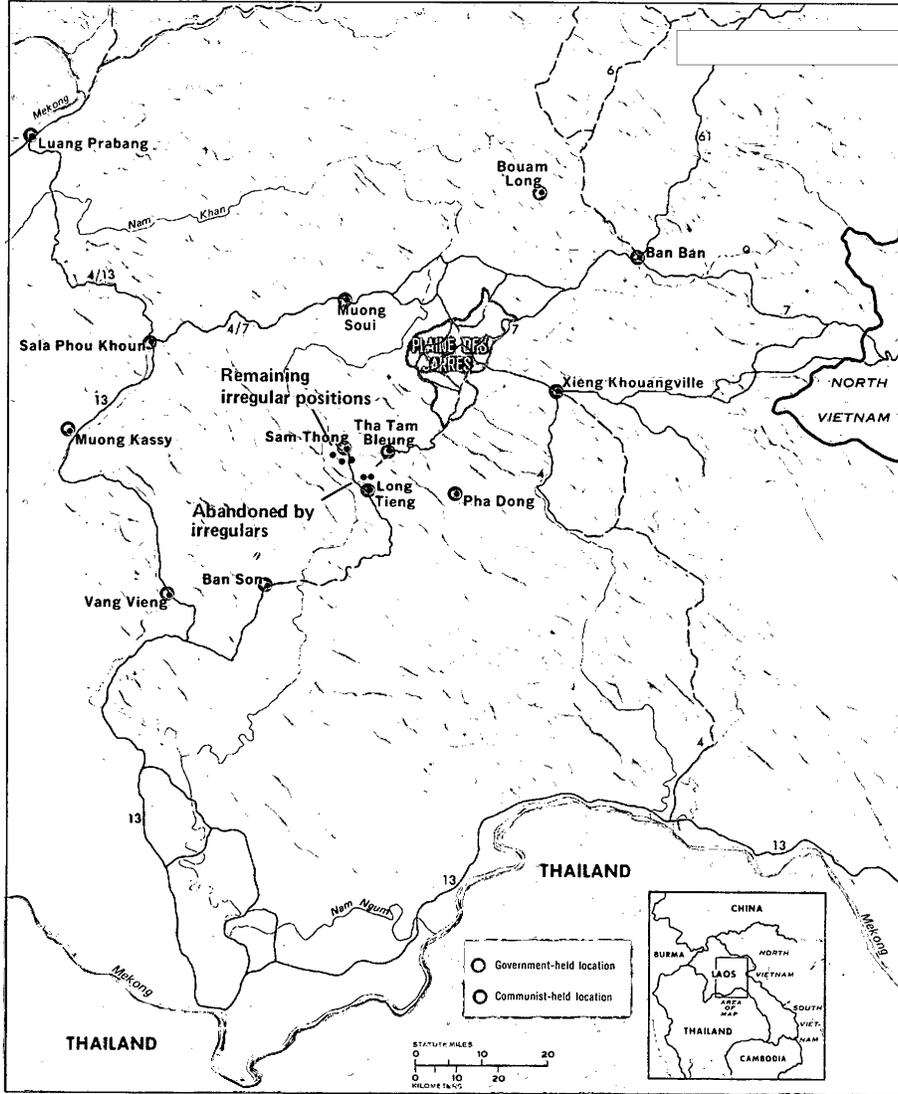
The Communist main-force units will have greater firepower than before. They have moved 130-mm. field guns into position north of the DMZ, other heavy guns are being moved into the two northern provinces of South Vietnam, and 122-mm. field guns and howitzers have been sent to the central highlands and to COSVN. In addition, tanks have been spotted north of the DMZ, southwest of the DMZ in Laos, and moving into the central highlands.

Because artillery, armor, and massed troops are vulnerable to air interdiction, the Communists also have improved their air defenses in Laos, north of the DMZ, and in South Vietnam as well. There has recently been an increase in MIG activity over southern North Vietnam and adjacent areas of Laos.

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# LAOS

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LAOS

The situation at Long Tieng has worsened appreciably. A Communist mortar attack forced an irregular battalion to abandon two defensive positions on Skyline Ridge yesterday. These positions were quickly occupied by Communist troops, and efforts to retake them have failed. Although the remaining positions on Skyline Ridge have also been shelled, the irregulars manning them have held their ground. The North Vietnamese are also shelling the Long Tieng valley. Poor weather conditions have curtailed air strikes against the enemy gun positions north of the government complex.

To the northwest, irregulars holding the three remaining positions in the Sam Thong area have reported no significant activity since 11 March. Intercepted messages, however, suggest that elements from the North Vietnamese 165th Regiment intend to move against these positions and are preparing to bring tanks into Sam Thong from the Tha Tam Bleung area. From Sam Thong these tanks could move by road into Long Tieng.

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CEYLON

[redacted] an insurgent group--apparently the same one that attacked the US Embassy a year ago--is planning another such attack as part of a new campaign of terrorism. The group also plans an assault on air force headquarters and assassination attempts against civilian and military leaders. [redacted]

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*Ceylonese authorities are giving greater credence to these reports than they did to similar signs of trouble during the past year. The armed forces and police have been placed on alert and other security precautions, such as providing guards for the US Embassy, are being taken.*

*Although Ceylon's insurgents may well launch a new wave of terrorism, it is unlikely that they could mount attacks on the scale of the island-wide insurgency that almost toppled the government last April. Some 14,000 rebels are still being held in detention camps, and those at large are not well armed.*

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NOTES

Jordan: As King Husayn's proposal for a semi-autonomous Palestinian state has leaked out, Arab media have begun to charge him with making a secret deal with Israel. Arab leaders are not likely to come out in support of Husayn's proposal, nor are they likely to try to stem the flood of invective sure to come against the King, Israel, and the US, which maintains ties with both of them. In this atmosphere, prospects for the assassination of the King are increased.

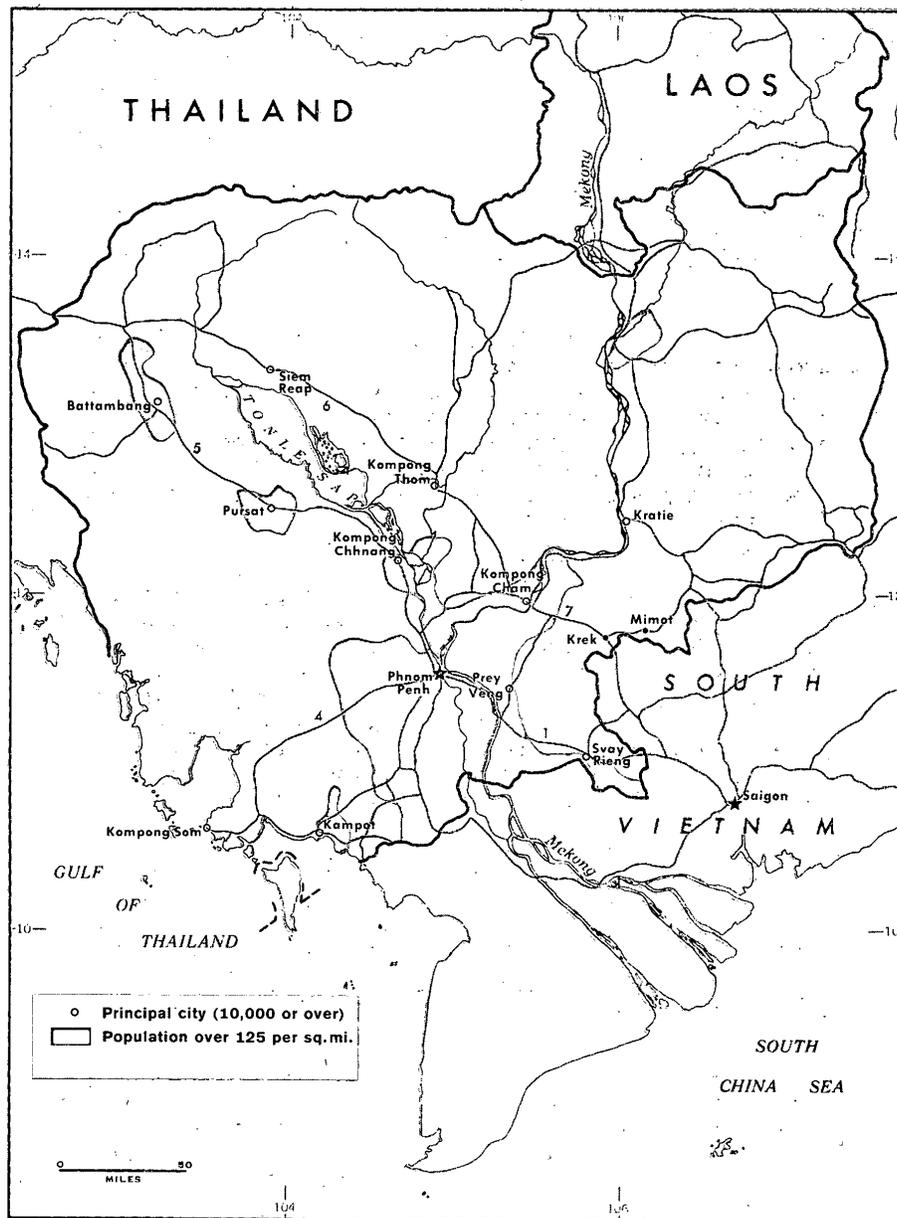
East Germany - West Germany: The East Germans appear to be getting in step with Soviet efforts to help assure Bundestag ratification of Bonn's Eastern treaties. In a speech last week, East German party leader Honecker gave the treaties his strongest endorsement to date. He referred to them as the linchpin to European detente and indicated that ratification would contribute to inter-German rapprochement.

China:

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Finland-USSR

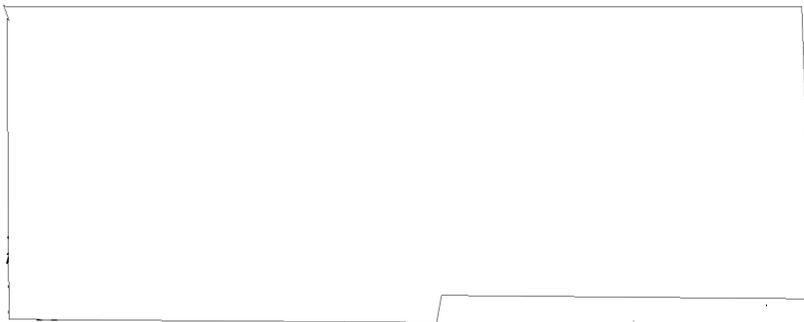
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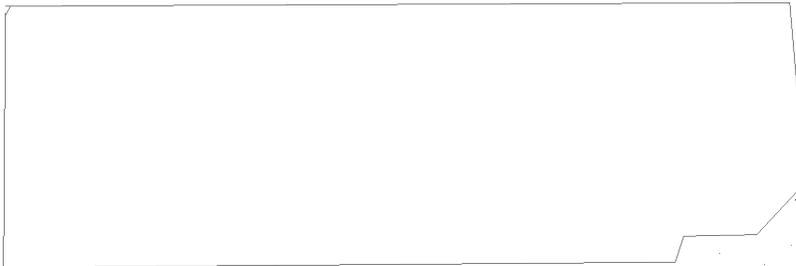
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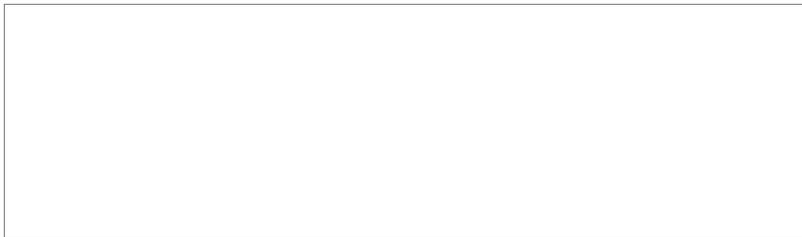
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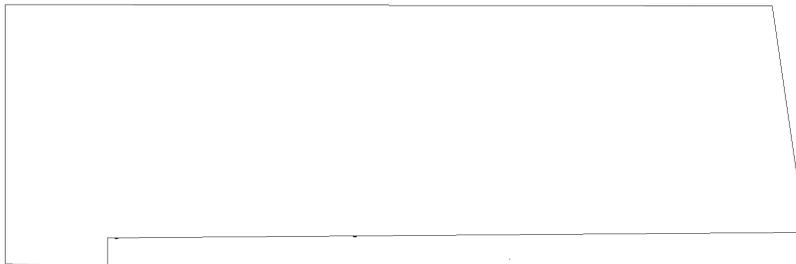
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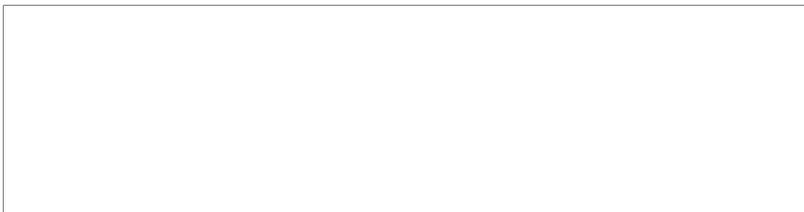
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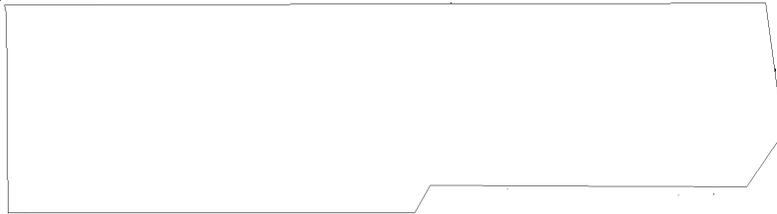


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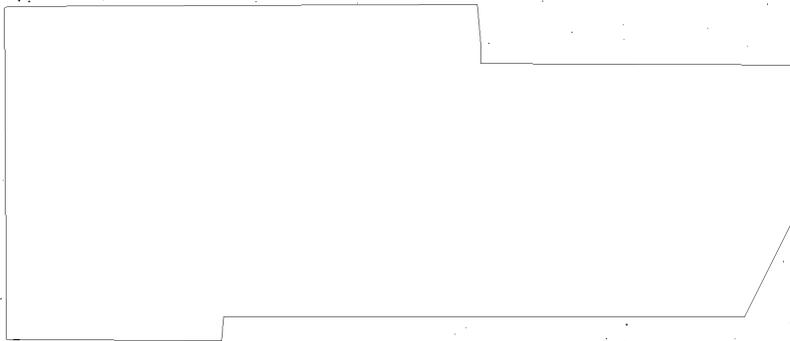
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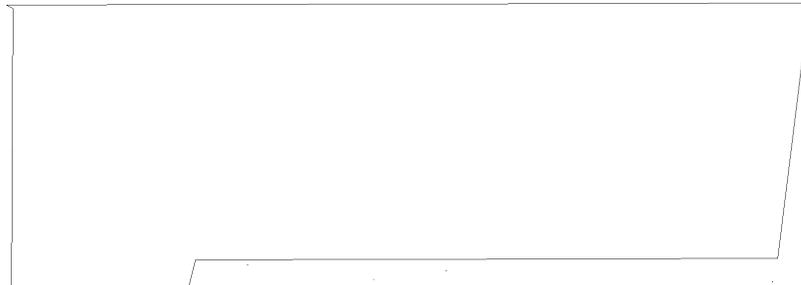
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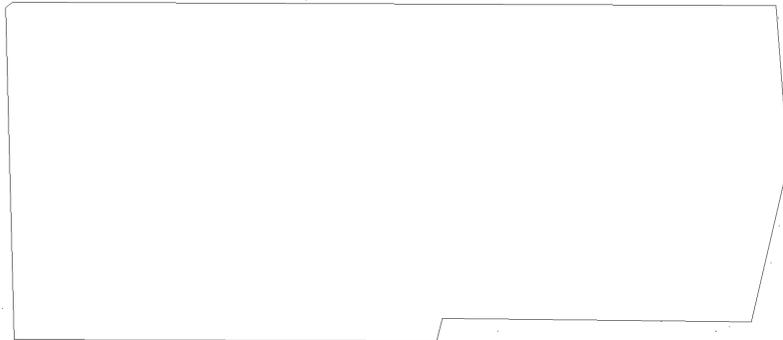
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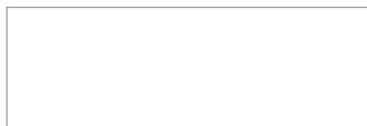


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